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Montana SCHOOLS

February/March 1996

Newsletter of the Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent
Vol. 39, No. 3

Certification update 2

The computer science teaching endorsement comes of age. Also, interested teachers can explore the possibilities of principal and counseling internships.

Consolidated plan 3

Parents, educators, and school districts assist OPI in the consolidated planning process.

Bridges 3

The nonprofit Public Agenda Foundation releases report on how people feel about public schools.

School budgets 4

A story in graphs.

Malta 6

A Christmas Eve fire fans a community effort that has students back in class in record time.

Field Notes 7

The Montana Natural History Center makes nature come alive for students—in the classroom.

Dispatches 8

Updates from OPI specialists.

And More . . .

New accreditation process gathers momentum

In the spring of 1995, Montana's Board of Public Education adopted an alternative school accreditation method. With the alternative, schools can engage in a locally driven and locally controlled process that allows them to meet accreditation requirements through a school improvement plan focusing on student performance.

This process is called Performance Based Accreditation (PBA). According to Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack Copps, "PBA provides schools with the opportunity to be known for excellence, not simply their compliance with quantitative state-mandated standards."

A change in focus

Historically, Montana has accredited its schools based on their ability to meet uniform state standards. These standards include such things as class-size limits, professional staff assignments, and course offerings.

Although the state standards exist to provide a framework for the quality education guaranteed by Montana's Constitution, they are not direct measures of quality. They do not reveal what—or whether—students learn.

"Performance Based Accreditation represents a change in focus from compliance with state-mandated standards to community-defined student expectations and goals for school improvement."
—Jack Copps

As an alternative standard, PBA enables schools to enter into an accreditation process involving self-evaluation, peer review and on-site visitations. "Performance Based Accreditation represents a change in focus from compliance with state-mandated standards to community-defined student expectations and goals for school improvement," Copps explained. Schools seek to demonstrate that the performance of their students meets their program goals or that specific changes to their program are necessary to improve student performance.



Curtis Starr

Malta students help with clean-up after the Christmas Eve fire

The five-step process

Educators and other members of the school community seek answers to five fundamental questions through the PBA process:

- ✓ What are the particular needs and strengths of this community and its students?
- ✓ What is the mission of this school and its philosophy of education?
- ✓ What are students expected to learn and be able to do, and what levels of performance does this school/community deem as acceptable?
- ✓ How effective are the instructional methods and organiza-

tional systems of this school in fulfilling its mission?

- ✓ What steps should be taken to improve the educational program of this school?

Focus on school improvement

Copps noted school improvement planning is what quality schools have been doing for years. Performance Based Accreditation provides the motivation, structure, and assistance for schools to continue to improve. By encouraging schools to define local standards, to develop instruction to meet them, and to monitor

(continued on page 5)

Federal impasse continues no resolution for education funding

As the federal budget impasse on educational funding stretches into spring, local school districts face the task of planning for next fall without knowing how much money they will have come September. One thing is certain, however: without a budget deal, schools will see a big cut in federal support.

The current continuing resolution, which allows the federal government to continue working, expires March 15, 1996. Under it, programs are funded at the lowest

of three marks: either the spending bill passed by the House, or the bill passed by the Senate. Any programs slated for elimination under one of the bills will receive up to 75 percent of their 1995 funding until March 15.

For education, the lowest of the three marks is most often the 1996 spending bill passed by the House, which contains cuts totally \$3.2 billion below 1995 levels. The House and Senate have not been able to agree on funding levels.

(continued on page 2)

Second Class
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How are Montana students doing?

You may have read some of the recent statements in the press suggesting that Montana lacks data on how well our students are doing.

As it happens, a great deal of information is available, and it indicates that our students are doing very well indeed! No single piece of information tells the whole story; it takes several pieces to present the broad picture.

Data from standardized tests provide one important piece of the picture. Assessment results for grades 4, 8, and 11 show Montana students score 10 to 20 percent higher than the national averages.



The 1990 and 1994 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading tests placed Montana students first among the states. College readiness scores (ACT and SAT) for Montana students are significantly higher than the national average, and they are higher now than five years ago, even though more of our students are taking the exams. Montana high school graduates in the armed services have the highest average qualification test scores in the nation.

Another piece of the picture concerns high school completion rates. U.S. Census figures for 1990 indicate Montana has the eighth lowest dropout rate in the nation. In 1990, 89 percent of Montana adults had high school degrees or the equivalent, compared to 82 percent nationally. Literacy studies place Montana eighth highest in the nation for upper level literacy proficiency.

The majority (70 percent) of Montana's high school graduates go on to college, and Montana's higher education completion rates are eighth highest in the nation.

Montana's high school students are taking increasingly more challenging courses. Students are now taking five times as many advanced placement courses as they did 10 years ago. The number of students taking the ACT test who have taken core college preparation courses, for example, has increased by 18 percent over five years.

When you put the pieces together, the picture is clear: Montana education works. Of course, educational excellence is a moving target, and we need to strive for constant improvement. Furthermore, we can't just measure our progress against other states; we must consider other nations, as well.

We do not lack information about Montana's students and schools. However, we do need to tell the story of our schools and students, their successes and challenges. I encourage all of you in Montana's education community to help tell the story.

Nancy Keenan

Federal impasse

(continued from page 1)

Even if the impasse between the House and Senate is broken, the tenor of current negotiations make it likely that Congress will cut billions of dollars from education programs. Last month, the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education proposed nearly a \$4 billion cut in educational programs for federal fiscal year 1996. These cuts, if approved by Congress, would be implemented with the 1996-97 school year and would cut funding for Montana schools by

18 percent below this school year's level. This is a reduction which, State Superintendent Nancy Keenan said, "would have a drastic effect on services to Montana students."

Meanwhile, school districts will have to continue to cope with uncertainty, formulate contingency plans, and prepare for the 1996-97 school year as best they can. Keenan said her staff will work to keep school districts informed as the congressional process unfolds. ■

Certification update

Computer science endorsement required

Within the last decade, the use of technology in business has become widespread that today, computers represent business-as-usual in the workplace. This change directly affects students' educational needs. Today's students need to develop the computer knowledge and skills they will require in order to meet tomorrow's education and employment opportunities. The question is how they will develop these skills.

Computer science endorsement approved

Six years ago, the Board of Public Education addressed changing educational needs by convening a committee of individuals from education and business. The board charged this committee with developing a teaching endorsement for computer science. In February 1991, the board changed Montana's accreditation policies by approving the computer science endorsement.

At that time, the board provided teachers and schools with a five-year period to comply with this planned change in Montana's accreditation policy. This grace period has now expired. Schools must demonstrate compliance with the computer science requirements when they file their accreditation reports in Fall 1996.

Who needs the endorsement

The computer science teaching endorsement is required for schools' computer coordinators and teachers of all computer courses that go beyond keyboarding and general computer literacy. Most often, this affects those who teach computer programming or topics on computer design and operations. It is important to note, however, the endorsement is not needed to teach applications of software to subjects such as business, English, science, and

mathematics. Those courses require an endorsement in the applicable subject area.

Components in computer science training

Any program designed to prepare individuals to teach computer science should include training in computer logic and programming, design, operation and maintenance. In addition, the application of technology to educational settings and the evaluation and purchase of hardware and software comprise essential elements of computer science training.

In the field of computer science, change is rapid and new developments, although often short-lived, cannot be ignored. As a result, concepts outlive processes. Updates on what is waxing or waning in computer science are available from college computer instructors or other experts.

Hiring computer personnel

The ever-evolving nature of computer science poses a unique challenge to administrators hiring computer personnel. The possession of a computer science endorsement does not reveal the following about potential hires: the extent of their training in any particular area; the recentness and applicability of their knowledge; their planning and coordination skills; their technical and mechanical aptitude; or, finally, their teaching skills.

A good approach for administrators is to consider the overall responsibilities of the computer position in their schools and the ratio of people skills to technical knowledge the position requires. Administrators can then review the training, experience, and college transcripts of potential computer personnel to evaluate whether they are the best candidates for that position. ■

Internship program available

Teachers interested in becoming principals or school counselors should investigate the internship programs available through a cooperative project between OPI and participating Montana universities. Approved by the Board of Public Education, these programs allow eligible participants to

assume administrative or counseling duties before completing all endorsement requirements.

Principal internships

Through this program, the superintendent of public instruction may allow up to 12 experi-

(Continued on page 6)

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Work continues on IASA consolidated plan

Recent federal legislation offers Montana educators an opportunity to change the way we work to improve teaching and learning in Montana. As Superintendent Nancy Keenan said, "given the reduction of resources in OPI and in school districts across our state, we must take this opportunity to think and work differently."

"We must take this opportunity to think and work differently."

—Nancy Keenan

Parents and educators assist

As reported in the September-October 1995 issue of *Montana Schools*, the Office of Public

Instruction staff continues to work on state and local consolidated plans allowed in the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA). Parent and school district representatives and existing advisory groups have been assisting with the work.

Programs addressed in state plan

The preliminary state plan, approved by the U.S. Department of Education in June 1995, addressed the following programs: Title I (formerly Chapter 1); Title II (formerly Eisenhower); Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities); Title VI (formerly Chapter 2); and Title VII of the McKinney Act (Education of Homeless Children and Youth). Unfortunately, not all programs included in the IASA are allowed — by U.S. Department of Education guidance — to be included in

the state plan. Bilingual Education is an example.

Comments solicited on draft plan

Recent efforts have included the development of a draft process for school districts to use to submit a consolidated plan to the OPI. The consolidated plan would replace individual applications for Title I, Title II, Title IV, and Title VI.

Copies of the draft process were mailed in January to district and county superintendents, principals (in districts with no superintendent), and clerks, as well as professional organizations. Recipients were asked to return their comments to OPI by the second week in February. Comments and recommendations will be reviewed, final documents will be prepared and printed, and OPI staff will conduct regional workshops in March.

The work continues

Efforts during February and March will include the completion of the draft of the state consolidated plan. The plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in May. The plan will replace individual applications which the included programs submitted in the past.

Please contribute

The draft plan will be shared for comments and recommendations among educators and parents. If you have questions about the IASA consolidated planning process for the state or for local school districts, please call OPI federal program staff or Nancy Coopersmith (444-5541). ■

—Nancy Coopersmith, Administrator
OPI Department of Accreditation and Curriculum Services

Bridges

Survey says public schools have work to do

When you get beyond media hype and political football playing, what do Americans really think about public schools? The Public Agenda Foundation, a private, nonprofit research organization, has been working for several years to find out.

Last year, Public Agenda released results from a landmark public opinion survey, "First Things First."

This nationwide survey revealed that most Americans, from every socioeconomic level and philosophical persuasion, believe that educators are barking up the wrong tree with most school reform efforts. Unless schools attend to the "first things first," Americans believe, reform efforts are a waste of time. What are the "first things?" Safe, orderly, disciplined schools that teach children to be proficient in reading, writing, and math — the basics.

This year, Public Agenda released results from another survey called "Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform."

The survey has important implications for Montana educators. Here are some of the results:

Support for public schools is fragile

"American support for public education is fragile and porous," concludes Public Agenda. "Although many people voice initial approval for their own local public schools, this support disintegrates at the slightest

probing."

Survey results show that most public school parents would send their children to private schools if they could afford it.

However, despite their frustrations, most Americans aren't ready to abandon the public school system. They want public schools to work, but they are confused about how to make this happen. They don't necessarily support voucher systems, for example, and they are divided as to whether more money would improve schools.

- 61 percent of Americans surveyed say private schools are more likely to provide order and discipline in the classroom than public schools.

- 53 percent say private schools have higher academic standards. Most people think private schools are safer and better at promoting values such as honesty and responsibility.

The basics

Americans, including parents, community leaders, and educators, overwhelmingly agree that teaching basics such as reading, writing, and arithmetic is "absolutely essential." (And the vast majority of Americans now believe computer literacy is one of the "basics.")

However, most non-educators believe many students receive their high school diplomas without mastering the basics. "People often express frustration at the seeming inability of America's schools to teach all children these

rather simple skills," the report says.

- 92 percent of Americans say teaching the basics is "absolutely essential," as do 99 percent of community leaders, 98 percent of teachers, and 100 percent of school administrators.

- 65 percent of community leaders say a high school diploma does not guarantee the student has learned the basics; 32 percent of teachers and 33 percent of administrators agree.

Despite their frustrations, most Americans aren't ready to abandon the public school system. They want public schools to work, but they are confused about how to make this happen.

- 80 percent of Americans believe computer skills are "absolutely essential" for students.

Raising standards: What people want, what they fear

Americans strongly support higher academic standards as a means of motivating students to learn more and perform better. This may come as a surprise to some educators who question public support for higher standards.

Perhaps even more surprising is the revelation that Americans think educators are the ones who stand in the way of higher standards by giving diplomas to youngsters who can barely read or write and by passing students who have failed to learn what was expected.

Although Americans want higher standards, they don't want children unnecessarily frightened or pressured in school. "In short," the report says, "people want standards that motivate, not standards that destroy."

The pursuit of knowledge

"Most Americans do not place a high value on knowledge for its own sake," the report says. People have highly pragmatic views of knowledge. They want their children to learn what is essential to get good jobs; beyond that, however, they feel highly educated people are often socially clumsy, impractical, and "book smart, lacking the common sense and understanding of regular folks." ■

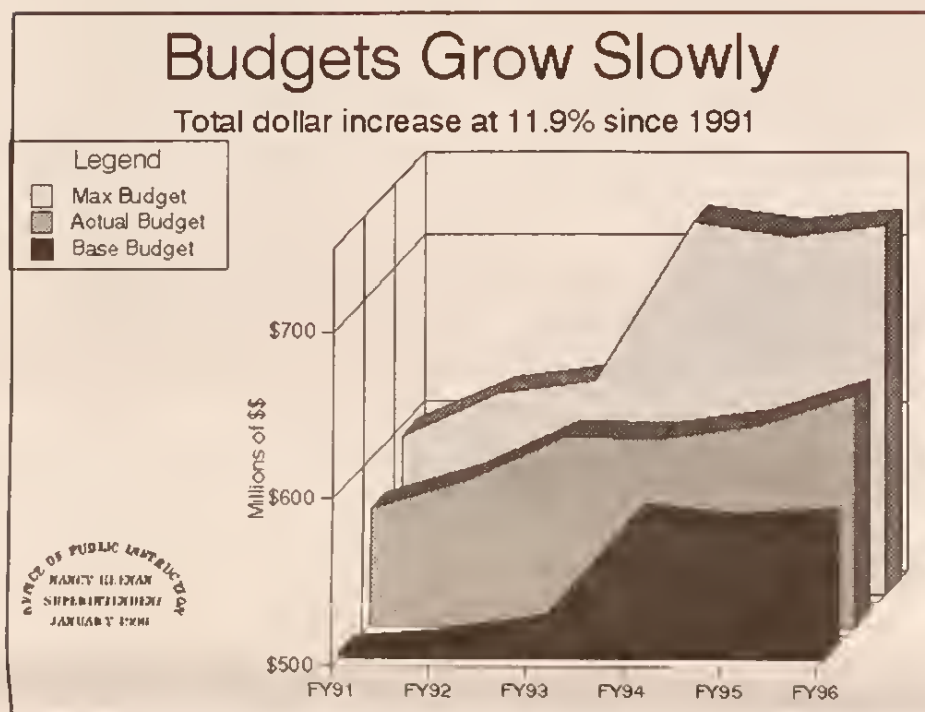
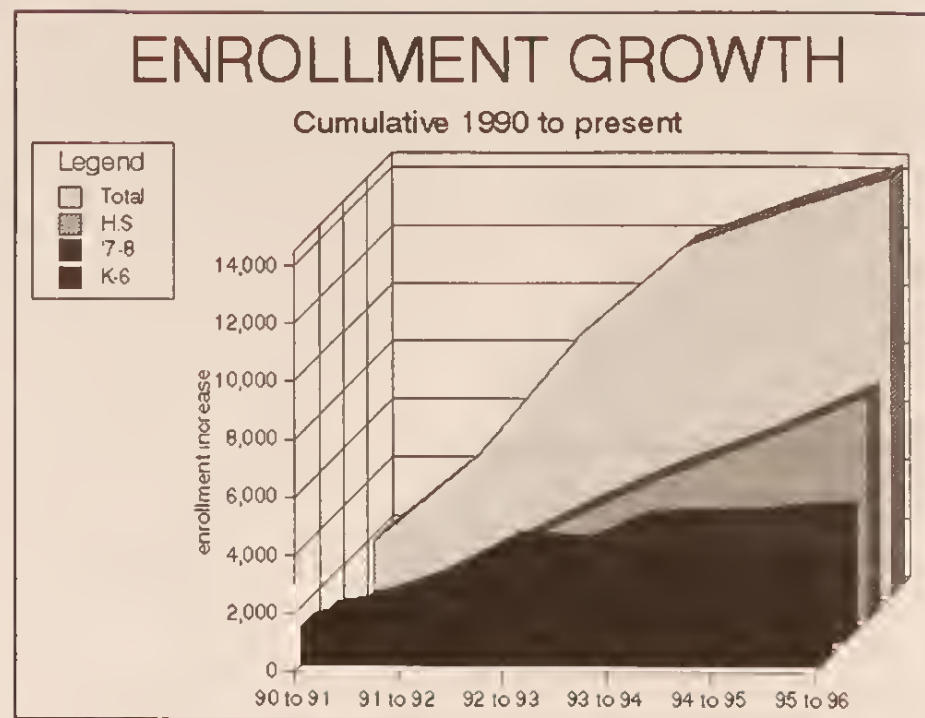
Sanna Porte Kiesling
OPI Director of Communications

Copies of "Assignment Incomplete" and "First Things First" are available from the Public Agenda Foundation, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016 (212-686-6610).

School budgets in Montana: a story in graphs

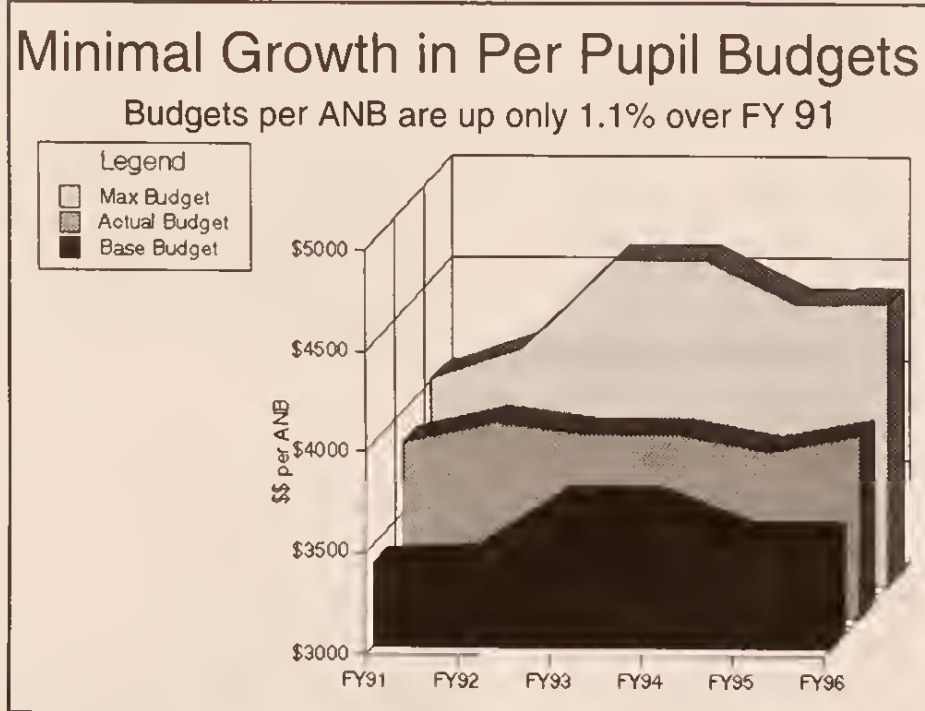
School enrollment is growing.....➔

Between the 1990-91 and 1995-96 school years, public school enrollment in Montana has increased by nearly 14,000 students. Interestingly, K-6 enrollment has been declining since 1992 while growth continues in 7-8 enrollment and high school enrollment. This indicates that while Montanans are slowing their birth rate, people continue to move into the state bringing older children (who are more expensive to educate). More children means local budgets have to increase just to accommodate the additional students.



←... School spending is restrained

Under state law, schools are required to set a minimum (BASE) budget to provide equal access to quality education. The front graph is the BASE budget; the rear graph shows the maximum budget allowed by law. Montana's schools continue to budget between those two limits. School general fund budgets in total have only grown 11.9 percent since 1991. Inflation during the same period has been over 14 percent.



←... Local budgets barely reflect enrollment growth

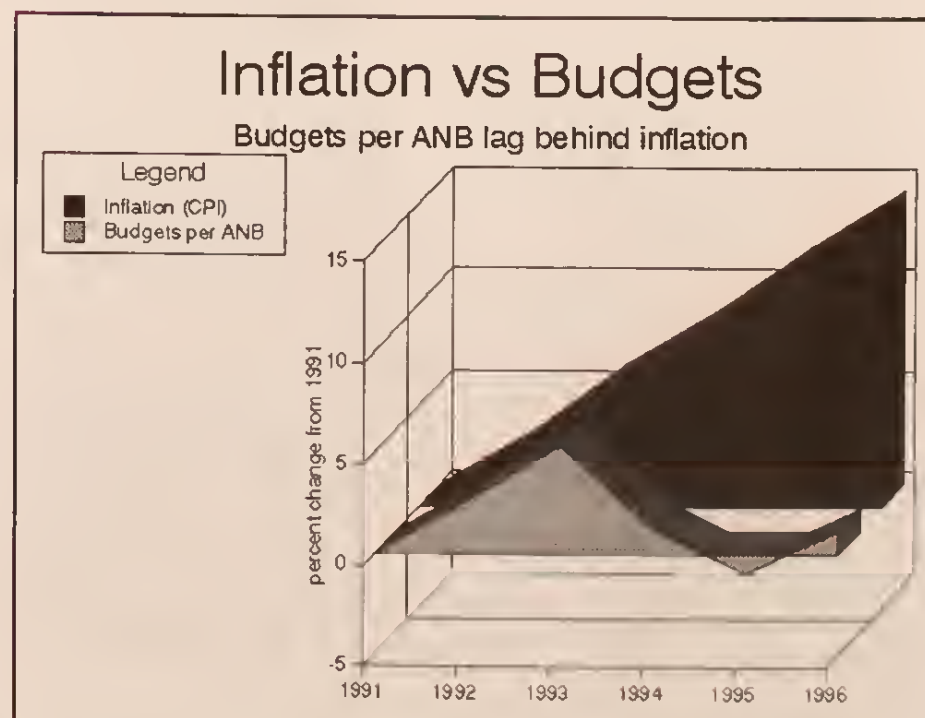
The best measure of how responsible schools have been with state and local taxpayer dollars is the budget per student (ANB) figures. Using that measure, Montana's schools have increased their per student budgets by only 1.1 percent since 1991. (The sharp reduction in 1993 budgets reflects the legislature's cut of over \$50 million in state school funding in the 1993 session.)

(ANB = Average Number Belonging. This number is calculated using previous year enrollment to determine current year school budgets.)

School budgets have not kept pace with inflation.....➔

School budgets per student today are actually *lower* than they were in 1992. At the same time, inflation has reduced school purchasing power by over 14 percent. It is important to remember that the largest part of any district budget is instructional spending, which includes items such as teacher salaries, books, materials, libraries, and counselors. Less purchasing power translates into less spent on these items which are critical to learning.

The question is: Do 1996 students deserve the same level of educational quality (as measured by per student spending) as students in 1992 received?



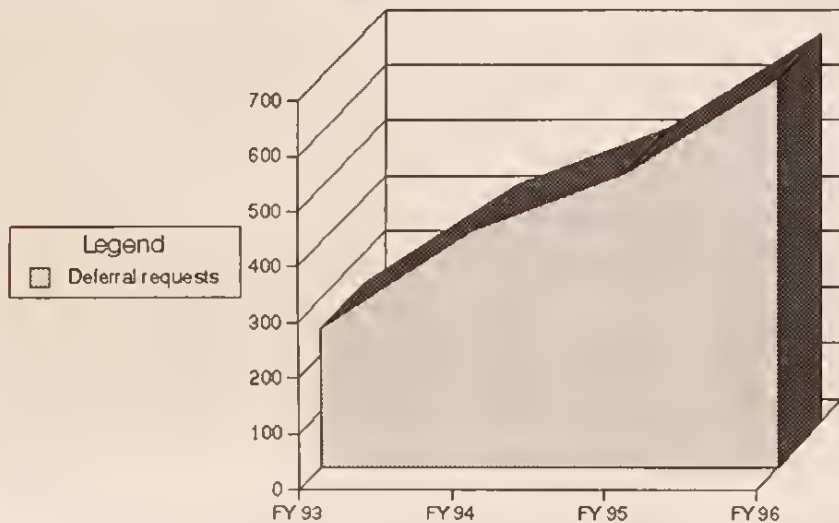
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When state education funding is cut, local taxpayers assume the burden

When the state reduces the amount of money it provides to educate students, schools must turn to local taxpayers to make up the difference. State funding for public education has eroded nearly to the level that prompted the "underfunded schools" lawsuits in 1989.

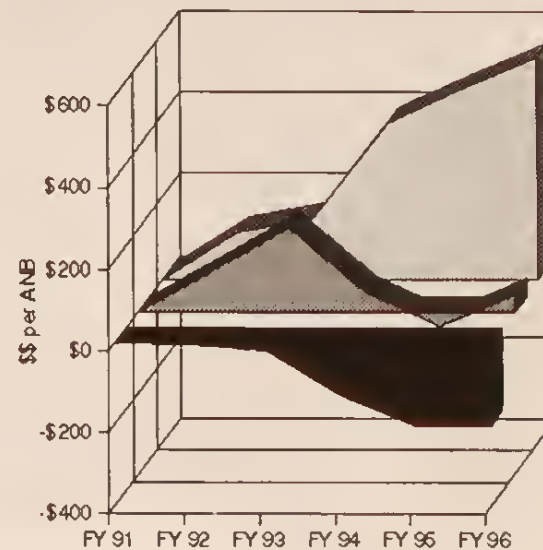
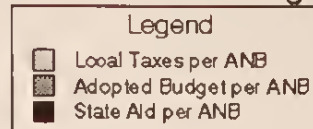
Quality Education Suffers

Requests for deferral of standards on the rise



Local Taxes Cover State Cuts

School budgets per ANB now below 1992 levels



The quality of education in Montana is affected

Another impact of funding reductions: Schools have had to request deferrals from accreditation standards. Funding reductions have hampered schools' ability to meet state standards in areas such as class size, availability of school counselors and foreign languages, to name just a couple.

This graph shows the increase in requests for deferrals from the accreditation standards. The standards were adopted by the State Board of Public Education in 1989 as **minimum accreditation standards** for Montana's public schools. The number of requests to operate schools **below the standards** has risen dramatically since 1993. This year, the Board has over 670 requests to defer the minimum education standards.

Performanced based accreditation

(Continued from page 1)

student performance in relation to these standards, PBA helps schools make accreditation a natural part of their local educational planning and evaluation processes.

Time-intensive process

As an alternative, PBA is not simpler, cheaper, or quicker than the traditional method of accrediting schools. "There is nothing easy about the performance based process. It is much more involved and time consuming than the traditional process," said Copps. "In fact, only energized schools seriously interested in school improvement will commit themselves to the rigors of the process."

Developing a profile for students and community, a mission statement, desired learner results, an analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, and a school improvement plan are steps that require time, effort, and the collaboration of all stakeholders in the school.

Community involvement

Schools that opt for PBA take responsibility for demonstrating their students' learning. To do

that, they must open their doors and classrooms to the scrutiny of their peers during an on-site review as well as to their communities. Copps emphasized that "community involvement and community awareness are key elements in PBA. Everyone has to be involved. If anyone is left out at the local level, the process is weakened." The rewards of this kind of work and commitment can be measured in terms of satisfaction, pride, and "doing the right thing" for our young people and communities, Copps said.

The PBA process does provide schools with information that can help improve programs for students. It can be an impetus for involving the community in setting goals for, supporting, and participating in their local schools. The process may also strengthen the educational community in Montana by bringing together educators from throughout the state during reviews of school improvement efforts.

Local control

Although the Alternative

While the PBA process is an alternative to traditional accreditation, it does not abandon or minimize the accreditation process. It is, however, different from traditional state accreditation in several ways.

The process:

- ✓ changes the method of monitoring a district's or school's accreditation compliance from a paper exchange to a comprehensive on-site visitation;
- ✓ transfers the responsibility of accreditation review from Office of Public Instruction staff to a combination of OPI, school district, and other education and community representatives;
- ✓ allows schools or districts to substitute their own alternative standards to be used as criteria for accreditation rather than the

standards set by the Board of Public Education;

- ✓ increases accreditation reviews to include periodic on-site reviews as well as yearly reports;
- ✓ uses alternative indicators of student success (attendance, involvement in extracurricular activities, performances, projects) demonstrated in a variety of ways, including portfolios and multi-media presentations;
- ✓ involves all members of the school community in the accreditation process; and
- ✓ includes data on student performance (learner results) and school improvement (such as comparative statistics on parental involvement, college placements, test scores, attendance) as criteria for determining accreditation status.

Standard has been in place since 1989, the link PBA forges between the accreditation process and school improvement is new to Montana. Because schools and communities are unique, with different profiles and missions,

their roads to improvement may differ.

Through a careful balancing of the five-step process and the on-site accreditation review, PBA can

(Continued on page 11)

Malta rises from the ashes

You can't keep a good community down



Community members at work

The Christmas Eve fire that destroyed Malta's historic junior high and high school building couldn't destroy Malta's community spirit. It only fanned the flames.

Within mere weeks of the tragedy, Malta's students and teachers were back in class, thanks to the barnraising efforts of community members and assistance from folks across Montana.

Classes don't look quite the same, of course. The Malta campus is now scattered throughout town, with students housed in seven different buildings includ-

ing a renovated retirement home and a Bureau of Land Management warehouse.

Malta residents pull together

The transition began even before the fire died out, with Superintendent Bill Parker and school board members working long into Christmas Eve planning a strategy to cope with the crisis.

Barely pausing for Christmas turkey, the Malta community was soon painting, hammering, sawing, wiring, plumbing, and otherwise transforming the retirement home and other buildings into classrooms. Volunteers swarmed over the projects "like ants on an anthill," according to Superintendent Parker. "It's been like a military operation."

Supplies head toward Malta

Meanwhile, the education community of Montana gathered desks, textbooks, computers, and other supplies, which the

state National Guard delivered to Malta. To help coordinate donations, the Office of Public Instruction set up a conference area on the METNET electronic bulletin board so educators across the state could keep up to date with what Malta needed.

School reopens doors

By January 9, classes were back in session. Although students and teachers sometimes have to turn sideways to pass each other in the "halls," spirits are high. Asked whether the crisis had brought the school closer together, one student quipped, "Yeah. Literally."

Projects continue; for example, students are converting an old garage into a computer lab in a classic School-to-Work (or perhaps School-to-Work-to-School) project.

Throughout Malta's makeshift

campus, visitors will see copies of a student-created poster that shows Malta's mascot, a mustang, rising Phoenix-like from flames. "You can't keep a good horse down," the poster reads.

You can't keep a good community down, either. ■



Malta high school after the fire



Making plans



Local plumber donates his time



"You can't keep a good horse down"

New program receives funding

Montana has received a five-year federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund a project that seeks to enhance Montana's capacity to serve children with severe disabilities in general education settings.

The project, Caring and Responsive Rural Education (CARRE), was awarded to the Montana University Affiliated Rural Institute on Disabilities. The Rural Institute's partners in

this effort are the Office of Public Instruction; Parents, Let's Unite for Kids; and MSU-Billings.

Project focuses on training activities

Project activities include training and efforts to increase public and professional knowledge about educational approaches that respond to the classroom needs of all students, including those with severe disabilities.

CARRE will award small competitive grants and technical assistance to selected schools that propose to develop more inclusive educational settings. The CARRE project is also designed to develop and increase local and regional resources available for training and support. The goal is to encourage the infusion of all-inclusive teaching practices into teacher training and postsecondary education courses. The project will also target activities that will reach the families of students with severe disabilities.

Participating schools identified

Montana schools selected to receive training and support for the current year are Eureka Public Schools, Eureka, and Smith School, Helena. Yet to be selected is a school district in the Eastern portion of the state. These districts receive monthly technical assistance in planning systems-wide change and a small stipend to support their efforts. ■

—Jo Jakupcak, Project Coordinator
Rural Institute on Disabilities

For more information about CARRE, contact Dr. Gail McGregor or Jo Jakupcak at the Rural Institute on Disabilities, 52 Corbin Hall, UM-Missoula, MT, 59813 (243-2446).

Certification

(Continued from page 2)

enced teachers to assume the duties of principal while completing the requisite graduate study in school administration. A participating school district selects a teacher who has the potential to become a principal and who meets the universities' entrance criteria for their master's program in school administration. The local trustees agree to employ the person as principal while the intern completes a planned and supervised program in school administration. The school district, intern, and university agree upon supervisory costs and support for the individual's professional development.

The contacts for the principal internship program are Dr. Keith Chambers at Montana State University, Bozeman, and Rick Unruh at the University of Montana, Missoula, Department of Education.

Counseling Intern

The counseling internship program is operated much like the administrative internship program. A school district enters into a cooperative agreement with the teacher-intern and a participating college program. The teacher

agrees to work as a counseling intern while pursuing an endorsement in K-12 guidance and counseling. Again, the school district, intern, and university agree upon supervisory costs and support for the individual's professional development.

Three counseling internship programs exist in the state. The program coordinators are Dr. Gerald Bekker at MSU-Northern, Dr. Mark Nelson at MSU-Bozeman, and Dr. Rita Sommers-Flanagan at the University of Montana, Missoula.

Procedure

Interested teachers or district officials should investigate program details and graduate school requirements by contacting program coordinators on the campus of their choice. For additional information, contact Marilyn Roberts (444-3150) or Don Freshour (444-2577) at OPI. Candidates for school year 1996-97 should be identified by July 1996. ■

—Don Freshour, Director, OPI Teacher Education and Certification

Montana Natural History Center celebrates international award and five years of success

In the fall of 1989, six second-graders at Missoula's Jefferson School climbed inside a grizzly hide and enjoyed an intimate encounter with the natural world without leaving their classroom. It was the debut of Montana's *Threatened and Endangered Species Kit*, an interdisciplinary curriculum kit designed by Missoula-area educators Jo Bernofsky and Kari Gunderson.

The kit was the first in a series of traveling educational kits that have become the backbone of the Montana Natural History Center's educational programs.

"To get a collection like this in your classroom is like opening a treasure chest," Bernofsky said. "It's a wonderful way to bring the outdoors into the classroom. Lots of kids in Montana get out into the woods. But the woods don't get into the classroom very often."

Educational offerings

Since 1990, the Montana Natural History Center (MNHC) has been working to change that. The non-profit group, based at the University of Montana, houses and maintains a growing collection of *Nature Discovery Kits* on topics ranging from air pollution to wolves. The MNHC also coordinates a variety of programs designed to teach about the natural world.

The *Nature Discovery Kits* are just one component of the MNHC's

effort to encourage people to appreciate and understand the natural world. MNHC's public radio programs, *Field Notes* and *Field Notes for Kids*, brief essays sparked by field observations, have aired weekly on KUFM-Missoula since 1991 and won the media award from the Montana Environmental Education Association in 1994.

The Raptors of the Rockies

Singing the songbird blues

The Montana Natural History Center's newest kit, *Songbird Blues*, recently won an international award from Partners in Flight, an international coalition of governmental and private agencies working to protect neotropical migratory songbirds. The kit's developers, MNHC board members and educators Margaret Manning, Robert Petty, and Pat Tucker, were selected as recipients for the 1995 Public Awareness award.

The kit, which teaches about neotropical migratory songbirds and the conservation issues related to their decline, contains a comprehensive curriculum guide with lesson plans and extension activities, reference books, student research kits, video and cassette tapes, puppets, dolls, posters, and bird specimens.

The Songbird Blues project began in 1992 as the brainchild of MNHC board member Sue Reel. Initially developed as a local educational effort with funding from the Lolo National Forest, it quickly spawned nationwide interest. There has been steady demand for the kit throughout the western U.S. and Mexico, and its use has been sponsored by the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, state wildlife agencies, and Audubon chapters. The curriculum is currently being revised for the eastern United States and Latin America. ■

program brings live birds of prey into classrooms, where wildlife rehabilitator Kate Davis discusses the lives and habitats of predators such as the red-tailed hawk, golden eagle, and great horned owl. The Summer Science Discovery Camp, hatched in 1994, offers kids a chance to get outside and explore along with local naturalists and educators.



A student looks at part of a *Nature Discovery Kit*.

Missoula's Water Festival

In June 1995, MNHC kicked off Missoula's first Water Festival, combining art and science to educate the city's 680 sixth-graders and the general public about the Clark Fork watershed. The *Water Festival* is scheduled to become an annual event. Two University of Montana interns have been busy this past semester recruiting writers for the *Field Notes* program and coordinating tours of UM's Zoological Museum. Just last month a toll free phone line was hooked up in the Center's office at the University of Montana to provide teachers across the state with access to the new Environmental Education Resource Library, a collection of over 200 titles.

Plans for the future

The MNHC has come a long way since it began as an informal association of biologists, naturalists and educators who, while assembling a county fair exhibit, realized they shared common interests and goals. Five years and several awards later, the organization is ready to take a giant step toward its dream of establishing a nature center in

Missoula. A recent grant will bring the first executive director on board in February 1996, and the group is currently expanding its board of directors to prepare for the monumental task of raising money for a state-of-the-art facility.

"We have come a long way," said Wendy Moore, MNHC's administrative assistant, "but we also have a long way to go. We want to be a resource for educators and the public throughout the Northern Rockies, as well as educate people about the natural history of the region. Based on the success of our programs so far, we have a reason to celebrate." ■

—Wendy Moore, MNHC
Administrative Assistant

"Field Notes" is a forum for Montana educators, students, parents, and others involved in education. Views presented in *Field Notes* do not necessarily represent views of the Office of Public Instruction.



This issue's *Field Notes* come from Missoula.

CSPD activities in Region II

Mandated by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Montana's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) seeks to develop and coordinate training, resources, and technical assistance for people involved in education in Montana. The goal: to aid people in their efforts to create sound educational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities. A topic of special concern to many regional councils is educating special needs children in the regular classroom.

Inclusion was the topic identified as most important on the Region II needs survey for the last school year.

Training opportunities provided

Susan Fister, who has a well-deserved reputation in our state as an effective trainer on educating children and youth with disabilities in the classroom, provided training to over 50 teachers and administrators in Fort Benton on January 25, 1995. Some of the areas she addressed were modifying and adapting instruction, social skills and strategy instruction, monitoring student progress, and co-teaching. Susan's positive approach and down-to-earth suggestions provided impetus for change and a desire on the part of many participants for more information. Follow-up inservices targeting

elementary and high school groups were made available. *Inclusion in the High School* was offered February in Havre. Co-presenters from Capital High School in Helena, Randy Carlson, assistant principal, and Dolores Slovarp, special education teacher, both at Capital High School in Helena, provided helpful ideas for scheduling, grading, and modifying instruction. *Inclusion in the Elementary School* was offered in Conrad in March. Kathy Albrecht, a first-grade teacher at Lockwood Primary School in Billings, also a trainer for the OPI Celebrating Diversity and the TIE Project, presented practical ideas for meeting the needs of the

special education child while still teaching 25 others.

A list of school visitation sites was compiled by Regional Representative Judy Gosnell-Lamb for those teachers who wanted to see theory translated into practice.

Current activities

During the current school year, Region II is focusing on behavior management. Upcoming events include *Strategic Tutoring* for paraprofessionals presented by D. Hoke of the University of Kansas and *Effective Behavior Support for Students with Severe Behavioral Challenges* presented by George

(Continued on page 12)

"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

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Teacher as researcher

Being a professional encompasses more than college courses and certificates. It also means weighing different opinions and gleaning insight from them. As true professionals, we constantly read, talk, and attend training to broaden our understanding of ways to reach students. In other words, we research. We take a bit of this idea, some of that, and temper the mix to motivate a particular learner. Then we step back, observe, and evaluate what is working and what is not.

Available resources

As teachers, administrators, or curriculum coordinators, we constantly make decisions that influence classroom instruction. Fortunately, we can refer to a variety of resources such as research reports, conventional wisdom, district policies, and practical advice columns in journals. Our task, then, is choosing wisely from the vast array of available — and sometimes contradictory — information.

How do we know what to choose? By being researchers. Through stepping back, observing, evaluating, and writing, we learn what works for students. Observations about what is happening in a classroom or with a student in a learning situation become pure GOLD that we can mine for insight, perspective, or a measure of progress.

Teacher as observer and writer

Donna E. Alverman, National Reading Research Center, University of Georgia, states, "We should view research as contributing to the belief system that teachers develop as they observe their own students working within their own classroom." Nancy Atwell, Center for Teaching and Learning, suggests that we teachers should act as researchers in our classrooms to understand the process we teach, the students we teach, and our own actions in relation to students.

Where to start

Start research in your classroom by recording your observations. Two rules for observing are: record what you see and don't worry about those things you cannot; and when you see things that interest you, pursue them. Take time to reflect on your observations and to ask: *What is happening here?* and

How can I use this information to support the learners in my classroom?

Find a support group of colleagues or organize a *Teachers' Book Club* to study and discuss your questions. Take advantage of inservice opportunities. Don't forget your students; if you are willing to listen and learn from them, they are available.

Educators who conduct research and write about their observations learn in their classrooms. As a result, they become thoughtful about how students learn and how they can help. They also become the best possible teachers. True professionals constantly read, talk together, and take inservice training to broaden their understanding of ways to reach students.

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Patterson, L., Santa, C., Short, K., Smith, K., Eds. (1993). *Teachers are Researchers: Reflection and Actions*, International Reading Association, Newark, DE.

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Shape your future: read!

Here are a few more reading activities in honor of *February: I Love To Read Month*. These can be used in what remains of February or throughout the year.

Capture the spirit of the Olympics

Use the Summer Olympics to motivate students to read and report back to the class in creative ways. This theme provides many topics to explore interdisciplinary units that span all learning styles, and areas of interest, grade, and ability levels.

Some ideas include the following topics: What does "Olympiad" mean? How and where did the Olympics begin? What is the newest sport added to the summer Olympic games? Compare sports in the summer and the winter Olympics. Research specific athletes and the history of their sports. Students can research this summer's Olympic host country or other participating countries. The Olympics generate a lot of news coverage. Have students bring in newspaper and magazine articles to read and compare.

Kremlin's overnight "read-in"

According to Twila Dryland, the elementary teachers from the KG Public Schools in Kremlin host an annual overnight read-in to celebrate *I Love to Read* month. During the evening, students enjoy activities at several different stations and sustained silent reading times.

Just before lights-out, a bedtime story is read in front of a flashlight campfire. Students sleep in the gym in their sleeping bags. The next morning students breakfast on doughnuts and juice before going home. Parents volunteer as helpers, and prizes are sometimes awarded.

Ms. Dryland says teachers plan different activities every year and the enthusiasm stays strong.

Please send the ways you celebrated *I Love To Read Month* to me or call me. If you have photos of students taking part in events, send those as well. We'll include your descriptions in future issues of *Montana Schools*.

Curriculum and Assessment
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Curriculum directors meet

On December 8, 1996, curriculum and curriculum consortium directors from across Montana attended an all-day meeting in Helena on issues of curriculum implementation. Participants welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences with one another.

Performance-based accreditation discussed

The directors spent nearly two hours discussing Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) with Deputy Superintendent Jack Copps and other OPI staff. Questions arose about statewide testing; a state report card; whether consortia could apply to pilot PBA; and the characteristics necessary for a school to embark upon the PBA process. Directors were enthusiastic about PBA and expressed hope that their schools would participate. (See related article on page 1.)

Other topics of discussion

Todd Taylor explained Colstrip's 90-minute block schedule. He said that both attendance and dropout rates have improved dramatically since its implementation last year. Other schools using some form of block scheduling include Missoula's Big Sky and Flathead High School.

Most schools represented at the December meeting are moving toward new ways to assess student performance. Curriculum directors suggested arranging a meeting between representatives from Montana schools that administer direct writing assessments. Please call me if you are interested in attending such a meeting.

Northwest regional conference scheduled

The National Council of Teachers of English Northwest Regional Conference will be held in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia, April 25-27. The conference theme is *Shifting Strands*.

GENESIS Conference

Planning for *GENESIS: Breathing Life into Learning through the Arts* continues as the parties involved — the University of Montana's Creative Pulse, the Montana Arts Council, OPI and the Montana Alliance for Arts Education — confirm speakers and set the schedule. Each day will include meal functions, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups.

Schedule

Wednesday, June 19, will focus on the role of arts in education and will feature Dr. Beverly Ann Chin, President of the National Council of Teachers of English, and Graham Down, President Emeritus, Council for Basic Education and former Chair of National Standards for Arts Education. Thursday's focus will be leadership, with an address from David O'Fallon of the Minnesota Center for Arts Education and a banquet address from Mary Clearman Blew, author of *All But the Waltz* and *Balsam Root*.

Friday will feature Howard

Gardner and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi focusing on Multiple Intelligences.

One semester credit will be offered and dormitory housing has been reserved. Conference cost, including luncheons, banquet, and continental breakfasts, is \$110. Please call me for registration materials.

Framework for Aesthetic Literacy training available

The *Framework for Aesthetic Literacy* has contracted with 17 trainers to provide inservice to schools throughout Montana. These ambassadors have developed exciting, idea-filled workshops that schools can use as after-school informational sessions or all-day, in-depth training.

The model schools welcome visitors and are prepared to provide tours, explain the project, and display their student work. Ambassadors Sherrill Dolezilek, Brandy Howey, Margaret Scott, and Pete Shea have also been trained as *Distinguished Educators*, and can help schools design a Title I school-wide program with an emphasis in aesthetic literacy. Please call me to schedule an ambassador or for the list of contacts at model schools.

Curriculum and assessment help available

The OPI has many publications available to help schools with their curriculum development and assessment planning. In addition to the many OPI-produced documents, we have a large collection of curriculum guides from around the country. We also have some videotaped programs. I am now handling the library media program, so please call me for assistance in these areas.

Educational Technology
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The OPI is participating with five other states in a technology grant recently awarded to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland. The grant is a five-year project designed to create a consortium that will tie into and build upon the region's existing communication systems. The consortium will provide services in staff



development, technical assistance, and dissemination.

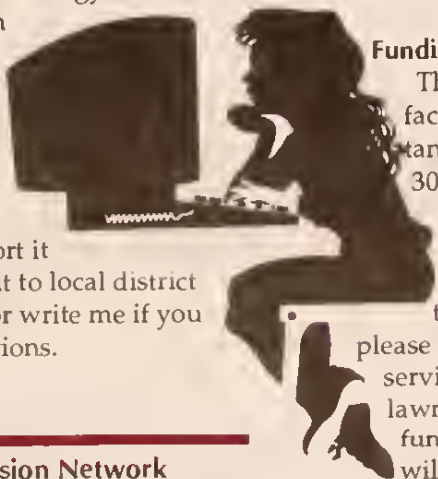
The consortium will emphasize effective technology integration in the curriculum, technology planning, and technical assistance for districts.

Preliminary goals

For Montana, the preliminary goals are:

- To place a high priority on teacher training in the use of technology and its integration into the curriculum and classroom.
- To approach the use of technology in Montana schools in a well-planned, universal, equitable, and long-term manner.
- To encourage and help all districts develop board-approved technology plans. Provisions should be made to assist districts and schools in the development and implementation of their educational technology plans. Furthermore, those plans should be institutionalized.
- To ensure that all students have access to the technology implemented in the school district.

As more information becomes available, I will report it here and send it to local district contacts. Call or write me if you have any questions.



National Diffusion Network
Patricia B. Johnson, Specialist
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Educational programs that work! National Diffusion Network (NDN) programs are research-based, proven, cost-effective and transferable.

Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)

The new IASA stresses collaboration among all entities providing education services, including school, parents, and community. It also stresses less compartmentalization and more schoolwide programs. Flexibility is provided to schools to submit consolidated plans and applications and to consolidate their federal administrative funds to meet that plan.

NDN programs complement IASA

NDN has programs that address the focus of the new IASA — collaboration and schoolwide improvement — as well as stand-alone programs that address a specific issue. (See the related article on page 3.) While the stand-alone programs are known to be inexpensive, comprehensive districtwide planning processes are not and usually take several years. Some NDN programs that address organizational reform are:

Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP) provides teachers of grades 1-9 with methods to improve their instructional and behavioral classroom

management skills.

More Effective Schools Teaching Project uses a process of systemic assessment, problem solving, and development of annual school improvement plans to increase academic achievement for all students and to improve the organization and delivery of instruction in schools throughout a district.

Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model (ODDM) is a comprehensive school improvement model which uses a systems approach to achieving excellence for all K-8 students.

The Program for School Improvement (PSI) assists schools in developing a shared governance process for making decisions about schoolwide improvement in curriculum, instruction, staff development, reorganization, and action research.

Systemic Technology to Support Education Reform (STSER) assists school district in planning for the comprehensive technology infrastructure needed to implement educational reform programs.

Funding News

The funding for NDN state facilitator services in Montana is secure through June 30, 1996, the end of the current grant period. This includes small amounts of money to help provide training for teachers, so please continue to request services. Until national lawmakers decide education funding issues, nothing else will be known.

New NDN Assistant

Sandy Nicholls has transferred to the OPI Accounting Services Division and Fran Briggeman has become the NDN program assistant. Highly experienced at OPI, Fran can be reached between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at 444-0906.

Directory of NDN programs

The latest directory of NDN programs will be available by the end of February. One copy is available for the person in each district responsible for curriculum. For your copy or information on training in NDN programs, call me at the above number.

Social Studies

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1996 Geography Bee

In January 1996, students in grades 4-8 competed in school geography bees all across Montana. Up to 100 local winners will participate at the State Geography Bee in Helena on March 29, 1996. The state winner will receive \$100 and other prizes, along with an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the May 28-29 national finals. The sponsors of the Bee are the Chrysler Corporation and *National Geographic World*, the National Geographic Society's magazine for children.

The National Geographic Society developed the National Geography Bee in response to concern about the lack of geographic knowledge among young people in the United States. The Society hopes the Bee will encourage students to learn and enjoy geography, while motivating educators to put geography back into the curriculum.

If you would like more information, call the National Geography Bee (202-828-6659).

1996 Montana Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest

An exciting program called *Conservation Through the Arts* has been introduced to Montana schools this year. Culminating in an art project for students, the program mixes science with art to create an exciting curriculum idea for teachers. Through a series of activities that touch on the arts, history, culture, and science, students learn about wetland and waterfowl conservation. The student's final project is the rendition of a duck, goose or swan in its native habitat.

Teachers are encouraged to hold an art contest at their school to select one or two final projects to send to the statewide *Montana Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest*. Artwork is judged in early spring, and an awards ceremony is held to recognize the winners in four age-group categories (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12), their teachers, and school. Winning artwork is displayed throughout Montana for the rest of that year.

This program is co-sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. For an informational packet about the program — including a video, brochure, and contest guidelines — contact Beth Underwood, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, PO Box 257, Stevensville, MT 59870 (777-5552) or Kurt Cunningham, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 E. 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620 (444-1267).

Montana Heritage Project

High schools wishing to conduct a course or unit of Montana Studies are invited to apply for financial support from the Montana Heritage Project before March 1, 1996. Grants from \$500-\$3,000 are available for secondary schools to use to develop study units focusing on Montana history and culture at the local level.

Teachers and community members from selected schools will attend an institute July 22-27, 1996, at MSU-Bozeman, where they will plan a unit for the coming year. Each unit will guide students through the following stages:

1. Forming broad questions for historical investigation.
2. Exploring those questions through library research.
3. Conducting field research into contemporary Montana culture by interviewing community members visiting sites, and comparing those findings with the historical record.
4. Creating final products to be

returned to the community, such as pamphlets, videotapes, historical signs, presentations, or museum exhibits.

For an application, write or phone Michael Umphrey, Director, Montana Heritage Project, P.O. Box 546, St. Ignatius, MT 59865 (240-5424).

**Division of
 Educational Opportunity
 and Equity**
B.J. Granbery, Administrator

Gender Equity

Kathy Bramer, Specialist
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The holidays brought a deep sigh of relief to the Gender Equity office after an exceptionally exciting and busy fall season.

Training grants and activities

Grants to support *Gender/Ethnic Expectations of Student Achievement (GESA)* training were awarded in September to six school districts: Harlem, Helena, Hamilton, Havre, Kalispell, and Billings. Four of these sites have new GESA facilitators on their teams. The facilitator training was held in Helena during June 1995 by Dr. Melissa Keyes, the Wisconsin Title IV Sex Equity Coordinator. The new facilitators are bringing great energy to the GESA program in Montana.

The training series this fall included *Investigation Training: Handling Complaints and Investigations of Sexual Harassment in Schools* and *Training for Trainers — Prevention is the Best Strategy: Sexual Harassment in Our Schools*, co-sponsored with The Equity Institute; and *Title IX Coordinator Training: Fulfilling the Spirit and the Letter of Title IX*. All workshops were well attended and received.

Expanding girls' horizons

Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics (EYH) is a program designed to encourage girls of middle-school age to consider careers in mathematics and science. Each year throughout Montana, EYH gives hundreds of young women the chance to meet and talk with professional women about their careers. It is an excellent chance for girls to be exposed to ideas, stories and people of varied backgrounds and interests.

With the co-sponsorship of the OPI Gender Equity program, six EYH conferences are scheduled throughout the state this Spring at the following sites:

- **Billings:** April 13, 1996, at Rocky Mountain College. Open to grades 6-12. Contact Nancy Downing (657-1050).
- **Bozeman:** April 13, 1996, at Montana State University. Open to grades 6-12. Contact Stacy Jovic (222-3407).
- **Butte:** March 2, 1996, at Montana Tech. Open to grades 6-12. Contact Eletha Suttley (496-4442).
- **Great Falls:** March 9, 1996, at the

University of Great Falls. Contact Lee Niebuhr (727-2200).

- **Kalispell:** March 30, 1996, at Flathead Community College. Contact Jean Robbins (work: 755-8600; home: 755-6395).
- **Missoula:** April 19, 1996, at Hellgate High School. Contact Cindy Babon (549-9835).

Gender Equity Conference

May 2-4, 1996, a *Gender Equity Conference* will be held in Great Falls at the Heritage Inn. This event will be co-sponsored by OPI and other agencies and organizations working in the equity arena. The focus will include equity training, information updates, reflections on the history of the equity movement, and strategies for future change. Watch for registration information out soon on METNET and in the mail.

As always, your requests for training, resources, and information are welcome. For more information, call me or George Burns (444-2410) at the Gender Equity office.

Title I

Joan Morris, Specialist
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New Even Start Family Literacy Grant

The Helena Child Care Partnerships, in partnership with the Helena School District, was the winner of the fourth Even Start Family Literacy grant. The team included Janet Brooke of Child Care Partnerships; Jake Gustin and Bill Muldowney of the Adult Learning Center; Lynn Guay and Mary Jane Standaert of Head Start; Karen Stout-Suenram of Lincoln School; Kate Solmonsson of Rossiter School; Kathleen Harrington of Plymouth Infant Care; and Candice Morris of the Lewis & Clark Library.

Other Even Start sites in Montana are in Billings, Browning, and Hardin. If you have additional questions or need additional information, please contact me.

Indian Education
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Montana Institute for the Effective Teaching of American Indian Children

This summer OPI and the MSU-College of Technology—Great Falls are co-sponsoring the eighth annual *Montana Institute for the Effective Teaching of American Indian Children*. The Institute will be held June 10-14, 1996, at the MSU-College of Technology—Great Falls and will involve approximately 60 certified Montana teachers and administrators. Graduate level credit will be offered for Institute instruction.

In addition to gaining up-to-date information, participants will work with materials available for teachers involved in educating American

Indian children. Information and materials will be presented by consultants with proven records in working successfully with American Indian students from throughout the United States.

Training topics

Included in the training are strategies for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills; effective instructional techniques; appropriate behavior management techniques; the integration of cultural information into curriculum; testing and evaluating American Indian children; developing cross-cultural communication skills; using effective motivational techniques; and effectively analyzing student behavior.

Workshop sessions will include: classroom management; motivation; improving self-esteem; how to evaluate American Indian books and materials; and integrating culture into social studies, science, language arts and other curriculum areas.

In addition to acquiring valuable academic information, participants will have the chance to discuss educational issues informally with experts during a variety of recreational activities, including a barbecue and reception.

For more specific information and registration forms, please contact me or Dr. Murt McCluskey (727-1101). Hurry, the Institute fills up quickly!!

Division of Health Enhancement and Safety
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School Foods
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Hungry children have a hard time learning

Breakfast readies children for learning. Classroom demands become burdensome for the child who is hungry. All children and adults, regardless of economic class, experience what is known as *transient hunger*. This occasional hunger and is eliminated by eating. Although adults learn to compensate for transient hunger, children have not yet developed this ability. As a result, students do not compensate for feelings of hunger.

Instead they exhibit unacceptable behavior which requires more disciplinary intervention.

When they are hungry, students' time-on-task is reduced. In order to concentrate and accomplish learning tasks, students require essential nutrients for energy. Breakfast provides these requirements while eliminating symptoms of hunger such as headache, fatigue, sleepiness, and restlessness. We all know breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Breakfast and the American family

Children experience morning hunger for many reasons. Parental neglect is not the major cause. Families do not eat together as often at breakfast as they do for other meals. Children are often left to eat alone — and often they do not.

About school breakfast

In many classrooms, demanding school subjects are taught in the morning. School breakfast is served closest to classroom work time and thus energizes students to do their best on their hardest work. Meals offered at school are available to all students.

School breakfast programs have increased greatly in the past five years in Montana. At the present time, programs operate in 103 public and six private school food authorities, 25 Residential Child Care Institutions, and four other institutions. Within these school food authorities, there are 274 feeding sites.

This increase is due, in part, to start-up breakfast grants for new equipment. Grants have been awarded to schools with a large percentage (approximately 30 percent) of the student enrollment eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. One condition of the breakfast program grant is that schools agree to offer school breakfasts for three years.

Hurdles are surmountable

School breakfasts have been very successful in participating schools. Flexibility and simple menus are key to the operation of a breakfast program.

Some of the reasons most often cited for not starting a breakfast program are bus schedules, cafeteria supervision, start-up costs, additional paperwork, and labor costs.

After the program is explained, however, school administrators and school food service personnel soon realize that these hurdles are not overwhelming. Bus schedules only have to be varied by 10 to 15 minutes and, since students are hungry, supervision is not a major problem. The only additional paperwork required is the development of a breakfast menu and the completion of production records. Start-up costs are actually minimal and labor costs can be held down by using flexible schedules. In fact, a school breakfast program can be self-supporting when a large percentage of students participating in the program are eligible for free and reduced-priced meals.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Health Education
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Violence prevention workshop
March 14-16, 1996, OPI is

co-sponsoring the *Montana Youth Violence Prevention Workshop*. The workshop will be in Butte at the Copper King.

The workshop is designed for — and limited to — 250 teachers, school counselors, principals, administrators, law enforcement officers, parents, or other community members interested in violence prevention. The conference features six hours of highly interactive and practical teaching strategies by nationally recognized trainers. Sectionals will be offered on school violence, establishing school safety teams, family violence, workplace violence, personal violence, youth and the law, the Montana Behavioral Initiative, and law-related education.

Featured speakers include State Superintendent Nancy Keenan, Governor Marc Racicot, Senator Max Baucus, and Deputy Director of the Department of Justice Dennis Taylor. Conference co-sponsors include the Montana Board of Crime Control, Butte Public Schools, and Western Montana College.

Registration is limited to 250. Please call me for more information.

Resource for schools

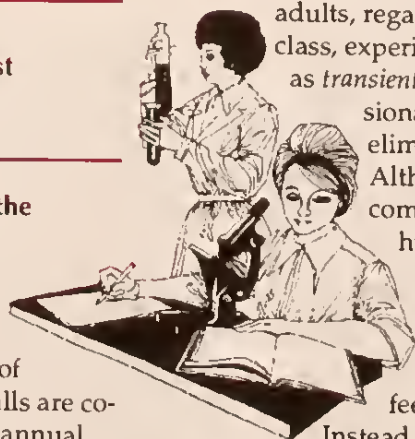
Many schools are working on communicable disease policies. In a cooperative effort, OPI and the Montana School Boards Association (MSBA) have produced a resource titled *Communicable Diseases: Policies and Procedures*. It contains model policies and the implementation procedures for HIV education, rights and accommodations for infected students and staff, and worksite safety issues. OPI and MSBA have also conducted two policy workshops for school administrators.

If any administrator wants a copy of the resource book, simply call me or Laurie Kops (444-1964) at OPI or call MSBA (442-2180). In addition, a school has granted us permission to offer its policy to schools as a working model. This policy is only one and one-half pages long, yet it addresses key policy elements. If any administrator would like a copy of this working policy, simply call me or Laurie and we will send it!

Traffic Education
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Children and air bags

The special safety issues car air bags pose for children can be solved as easy as 1 - 2 - 3. One, *never* place a rear-facing child safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag. Two, make sure all children are buckled up no matter where they sit — unbuckled children can be hurt or killed by an air bag. Three, remember that the rear seat is the safest place for children of any age to ride.



Research on young novice drivers

Research shows that young drivers may take risks more often because they are less likely to perceive risky situations and potential hazards. Risk tolerance, risk perception, and skill are seen as the most critical factors in young drivers' crashes, and risk perception is the most important.

This raises a difficult question: Do young drivers engage in riskier practices because they fail to perceive risk or because they accept it? The lack of risk perception, along with a high need for stimulation, could, in part, account for young drivers' tendency to drive faster than more experienced drivers.

Model curriculum outline

I have a limited number of copies of the national publication, *Novice Driver Education Model Curriculum Outline*. It is well written, well documented, and provides interesting background and "food for thought" about the past and future of driver education. If you would like a copy, call or send me an e-mail message.

Montana traffic curriculum

The 1995 high school Traffic Education Curriculum is now available. If you would like to receive your personal copy let me know.

New resources available

The Insurance Educator is a free newsletter designed to provide secondary educators with a greater knowledge of insurance, access to teaching materials, new ideas, and insurance career information for students. You can subscribe by writing or calling the Insurance Education Foundation, 3601 Vincennes Road, PO Box 68700, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (317-876-6046).

Auto Insurance: Getting the Best Value is a 16-page booklet that explains automobile policies, how rates are determined, what to do after an accident, etc. Circulation is limited to one per teacher. To receive your copy, contact Jo Ann Hagle at the USAA Foundation, USAA Building D-3-E, San Antonio, TX 78288.

1996 traffic education conference

The 1996 OPI/MTEA state conference will be held May 5-7, 1996, at the Heritage Inn, Great Falls. MSU-Northern will be offering one semester credit, and OPI will be offering 15 renewal units. (Renewal units can now only be used to renew your Montana Teaching Certificate, not your approval to teach traffic education.) Registration information will be mailed in March. The next available Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP) training will be held during this conference.

Traffic education

If your teaching certificate expired this past June, so did your

approval to teach traffic education. If you need an application to renew or other assistance, please let me know.

Division of
Special Education
Robert Runkel, Administrator

IDEA—Part B

Marilyn Pearson, Specialist
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Educational interpreter training

Since 1975, the need for educational interpreters in K-12 classrooms has dramatically increased. In December 1994, Montana's child count reported 142 students who were hard of hearing, 68 students with deafness, and 19 students who were deaf and blind. Increasing school enrollment in Montana indicates this number will continue to grow. Competent interpreting is essential for these children to access the educational opportunities in our schools.

Interpreting challenges

Interpreting is a complex skill requiring many simultaneous functions. Interpreters who specialize in the K-12 arena need to have a broad-based understanding of not only interpreting, but also children and the educational setting.

Task force deliberates

Recognizing the need to improve the availability and quality of interpreting available to Montana students, OPI established a Task Force on Interpreter Training in February 1995. Composed of 10 members representing parents, school administrators, interpreters, and organizations serving children with hearing loss in Montana, the Task Force's mission was to develop and coordinate training opportunities for educational interpreters.

As a result of their work, the Task Force has developed a coordinated series of workshops in January, April, and August of 1996 and in the *Educational Interpreter Endorsement Project (EIEP)* which begins in the fall of 1996.

For more information on the Task Force deliberations or its members, contact me at the above number.

EIEP goals

The project's primary goal is to provide educational interpreters with the chance to attain the knowledge and skills they need to serve children with hearing losses in Montana schools. Designed to use current and emerging distance education technology, EIEP will deliver 350 hours of training to working interpreters across Montana over a three year period. The project's focus will be the specialized knowledge and skills needed to serve students with hearing loss in K-12 settings.

How will EIEP work?

The program duration is three

years. During fall and spring semesters, participants will study at home using videotapes, audiotapes, and printed materials. They will also participate in scheduled compressed interactive video sessions. Each summer, participants will spend three weeks in Great Falls for intensive, hands-on work. Finally, they will complete an internship at their worksites.

When they have successfully finished their training, participants will receive an endorsement recognizing their achievement and commitment from the Front Range Community College in Denver, Colorado.

Where do things stand?

Currently OPI, Montana State University, MSU College of Technology—Great Falls, Front Range Community College, and Pikes Peak Community College have formed a partnership around EIEP. The Montana Association of the Deaf and the Montana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (MRID) have offered their support for the project. The goal is to start actual interpreter training no later than January 1997.

Interpreter education opportunities through summer 1996

The on-day workshops will run from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at five METNET sites: Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, Kalispell, and Great Falls. Each workshop will present ideas that support self-directed learning and facilitators will be at each site to assist with small group activities. Because they are supported by OPI with IDEA Part B funds, there is no cost for the April training. Call me for information or to register for the April workshop.

Visual Aspects of Sign Communication: January 20, 1996: Ann Topliff presented this workshop which was designed to explore concrete concepts of visualization. Participants can incorporate these principles into the sign language or system they regularly use. Exercises for tapping into and strengthening visualization abilities were conducted.

Going It Alone: Skill Building for You by You: April 13, 1996: Leilani Johnson will present this workshop looking at ways isolated interpret-

ers can create self-directed interpreter enhancement regimens. Ideas for collaboration, even across geographical barriers, will be shared. Participants are encouraged to bring their own ideas and success stories.

Big Sky Interpreter Conference:

August 12-16, 1996: This week-long workshop will be held at the MSU College of Technology—Great Falls. Housing will be available at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. Topics include the history of interpreting, the deaf community, ASL-English, comparative linguistics, professional interpreter issues, and incorporating visual aspects into interpretation. For information, call Melody Dompf (892-3532).

School nurse emergency course

Are you interested in improving your skills in assessing and helping children who are injured or become seriously ill at school? Now, school nurses in Montana have the opportunity to participate in the School Nurse Emergency Medical Services for Children program, a pilot project of the University of Connecticut Health Center.

In October 1995, a Montana school nurse and an emergency nurse attended a *train the trainer* program in Connecticut.

This two and one-half day instructional program will be replicated in Helena, March 20-22, 1996, in conjunction with the Montana Public Health Nurses/School Nurses annual spring conference. The course will use a combination of lectures, small group exercises, practical sessions, and demonstrations. Topics include planning for emergencies, legal issues, initial head-to-toe assessment and triage, medical and environmental emergencies, and psychobehavioral emergencies.

The registration fee will be around \$50, which includes the instruction, the *School Nurse Emergency Manual*, handout materials, and continuing education credits. This is a fantastic deal — school nurses in Connecticut pay \$125 for the same course.

Final details and registration information will be forthcoming. Contact Ann Drenk, 221 Westridge Drive, Bozeman, MT 59715 for more information.

PBA

(Continued from page 5)

allow schools to maintain local control and verify school improvement.

Resource manual available

Since the adoption of the PBA alternative, staff members of the OPI, the Board of Public Education, and representatives from schools and organizations have been working together to define policies for PBA implementation. They have developed a "User's

Manual" for schools wishing to pursue this new road to accreditation. Educators wanting to learn more about the Performance-Based Accreditation process or to receive a copy of the User's Manual may contact Jack Copps (444-5643) or Jan Hahn (444-3714) at OPI. ■

—Jan Hahn, OPI, Curriculum and Assessment Specialist

Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

Resources

Bus for sale

School district six in Columbia Falls has a 1984 wheelchair-equipped bus for sale. It has approximately 130,000 miles and is in great shape. Contact John Giacomino (892-655).

Olympic curriculum series

The United States Olympic Committee and its education council have released *Share the Olympic Dream*, a curriculum series on the Olympic Games. The series includes curriculum guides, thematic unite, video presentations, student activity booklets, and an Olympic Day in the School Program. Contact Griffen Publishing (800-935-4872).

Workshops/Conferences

Watershed education institutes

Project WET and Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) are offering six Introductory Watershed Education Institutes in six different states in 1996. These institutes target secondary teachers interested in interdisciplinary learning. Participants will see water-based, hands-on classroom activities, learn techniques for student problem solving, and skills for water quality monitoring.

The workshops closest to Montana are June 17-20 in Moorhead, MN, and July 30-August 2 in McKenzie, OR. Contact Gina Morrison, Project WET, Culbertson Hall, MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717 (994-1913).

ADHD training

Dr. Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., director of psychology and professor of psychiatry and neurology, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, will present a program on June 13-15, 1996, in Billings. The workshop focus is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in both children and adults. Training in assessment and treatment strategies is also provided.

Professional, continuing education, and university credit offered. Contact Evey LaMont or Nancy Padon of the Montana Association of School Psychologists (255-3623).

Student Opportunities

Planes and pilots

The Montana Aeronautics Division is sponsoring a career day

to increase awareness of the career opportunities in the field of aviation and aerospace. The career day will be March 1, 1996, at the Colonial Inn in Helena. A structured program will focus on aviation professionals, including airline pilots, flight instructors, and maintenance personnel. Interested secondary students are invited to attend one of the two free sessions. Contact Jeanne Lesnik (444-2506) or JoAnn Eisenzimer (468-2338).

DO-IT Scholars program

The Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology (DO-IT) program is actively recruiting high school sophomores with disabilities to participate in a multi-year program. Primarily funded by the National Science Foundation, DO-IT focuses on transition to academic programs and careers in science, engineering, and mathematics. Participation is free of charge.

Each DO-IT Scholar is loaned computer equipment and any adaptive technology needed to access their computer; provided with an Internet account; matched up with mentors; and asked to attend a summer study session at the University of Washington.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. More information is available on the DO-IT Scholars World Wide Web home page (<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit>). Contact Sheryl Burgstahler, DO-IT Director (206-685-4045).

Montana history day fair

Middle and high school social studies teachers can begin planning activities that focus on, "Taking a Stand in History," the theme for the 1996 National History Day. Participating students prepare papers, exhibits, performances, or media presentations for Montana's History Day Fair competition Saturday, April 27, 1996. State winners are eligible to compete at National History Day at the University of Maryland. Contact the Education Office, Montana Historical Society, P.O. Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201 (444-4794).

Poster contests

Montana state parks

The Parks Division of the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is sponsoring a statewide poster contest for Montana fifth graders. This year's theme is *Montana State Parks — Share and Care — Please Don't Vandalize*.

The contest is designed to enhance students' understanding, awareness, and appreciation of what exists in Montana's state parks. Participating schools will submit their top five selections to compete at the state level. Three state winners will be chosen and presented with savings bonds. The school that submits the winning poster will also receive special gifts. Deadline for entries is April 5, 1996. Contact Debbie Cheek, Dept of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (444-4701).

CALENDAR

March

2: Northwest Reading Conference, Kalispell—Diane Taylor, 257-2301 or June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664
2: Expanding your Horizons in Science and Math (EYH) Conference, Butte—Eletha Suttley, 496-4442
3-5: Business Professionals of America Conference, Great Falls—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000
3-5: DECA Career Development Conference, Helena—Barb Roberston, OPI, 444-4456 or 442-6952
5-9: 5th National Conference & Exhibition on Transporting Students with Disabilities, Birmingham, AL—Federal News Services, 301-608-9322
9: EYH Conference, Great Falls—Lee Niebuhr, 727-2200
14-16: Youth Violence Prevention Conference, Butte—Vicki Lansing, Western Montana College Outreach Division, 683-7537.
14-16: IRA Reading Conference, Bellevue, WA—Rebecca Olness, 360-886-1853
March 22-23: Annual spring meeting of the Montana Association of Language Teachers, Bozeman.—Duane Jackson, OPI, 444-3129
28-29: Board of Public Education, Helena—Wayne Buchanan, 444-0076
28-30: FHA/HERO Conference, Billings—Laurie Stelter, OPI, 444-2059
29-30: 1996 Northwest Regional Family Literacy Conference, Vancouver, WA—Sue Webster, 549-8765
30: EYH Conference, Kalispell—Jean Robbins, 755-8600 or 755-6395

April

11-13: FFA Conference, Bozeman—Leonard Lombardi, OPI, 444-4451
13: EYH conference, Billings—Nancy Downing, 657-1050 and Bozeman—Stacy Jovic, 222-3407
15-17: VICA State Leadership Conference and Montana Skills USA Championships, Havre—Jeff Wulf, OPI, 444-4452
18-20: Montana AGATE, Kalispell—Joanne Mahoney, 752-1347.
18-19: CSPAC Meeting, Missoula—Peter Donovan, 444-0301
19: EYH Conference, Missoula—Cindy Babon, 549-9835
28-5/3: International Reading Conference, New Orleans, LA—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664

May

2-4: Gender Equity Conference, Great

Falls—Kathy Bramer, OPI, (444-1952) or George Burns, OPI, 444-2410
2-4: Mountain Plains Adult Education Association Annual Conference, Helena—Gloria Gregg, 994-1854
5-7: 1996 OPI/MTEA State Conference, Great Falls—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432
9: 1995 Ford / AAA Student Auto Skills Hands-on Competition, Helena—Jeff Wulf, OPI, 444-4452
23-24: Board of Public Education, Helena—Wayne Buchanan, 444-0076

June

10-14: Montana Institute for the Effective Teaching of American Indian Children, Great Falls—Bob Parsley, OPI, 444-3013 or Dr. Murt McCluskey, 727-1101
10-14: MT Agricultural Education Update Conference, Kalispell—Randy Violett, 994-2132
12-14: MT Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Annual Conference, Butte—Donna Hill, 452-0082
13-15: Montana Association of School Psychologists' Summer Institute on ADHD, Russell Barkley, Ph.D., Billings—Evey LaMont, 255-3623
19-21: GENESIS: Breathing Life into Learning through the Arts, Missoula—Jan Hahn, OPI, 444-3714

July

18-19: CSPAC Meeting, Helena—Peter Donovan, 444-0301

August

19-21: 1996 IRA Regional Reading Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba—Marilyn A. Raman, 204-233-8734

September

26-28: 23rd Plains IRA Regional Reading Conference, Bismarck, ND—Joyce Hinman, 701-258-5384

October

7: Five Valleys Reading Conference, Missoula—Jennifer Christensen, 273-6720 or June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664
17-18: MEA\MFT Instruction and Professional Development Convention, Helena—Eric Feaver, MEA, 442-4250
17-18: Montana State Reading Conference, Great Falls—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664

CSPD

(Continued from page 7)

Sugai from the University of Oregon.

Region II continues to encourage participation from administrators and regular education teachers and will be seeking ways to involve more parents of special education students in both the planning and participation in the inservice offerings. ■

—Elaine Colie Spindler, Ed.D., Director, Northcentral Learning Resource Center

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